

Kessler, Ellen

From: Strength, Stephanie - Washington, DC [Stephanie.Strength@wdc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2009 3:03 PM
To: Lilley, Bliss
Cc: Collins, Carly
Subject: FW: CapX2020 Fargo-St. Cloud-Monticello 345-kV project
Attachments: E I Transmission Line.pdf; revised Alternate Route.jpg

From: Paul Schwinghammer [mailto:paul@redbarnridge.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 07, 2009 11:35 AM
To: david.birkholz@state.mn.us
Cc: raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us; Strength, Stephanie - Washington, DC
Subject: CapX2020 Fargo-St. Cloud-Monticello 345-kV project

Hello David,
It was a pleasure to speak with you at the Clearwater Town Hall. As per your request, I have put my thoughts in writing.
The attached documents are in regards to the EIS process for CapX2020.
Please feel free to forward these comment on to others.

Thank You!
Paul Schwinghammer
Schwinghammer Family Partnership
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I-135-001 | Re: CapX2020 Fargo-St. Cloud-Monticello 345-kV project

Power line alternate options (At the point in which County road 136 turns from a north/south route to an east/ west route in St. Augusta) - see attached map)

The "Primary Route" (along I-94) is the preferred route by the vast majority of the citizens of the area. From an environmental impact stand point the "Alternate Routes" have a number of issues that are of great concern to me and I suggest that the alternate options be amended. Listed below are some of those concerns and other possible options. The local community and I are very willing to work within the power line process to help construct this much needed resource.

1. Neenah Creek, a MN state designated trout stream, will be crossed three times in less than a mile due to the small jog in the "Alternate Routes". This is due to the small jog and the two 90 degree turns in the routes. In addition to the trout stream this route would also cross over oak savanna forests, a housing development, historic areas and would pass near Mr. Joe Kenning's home and farm yard twice.

- While it is commendable that the power company is trying to utilize an existing right-of-way, we the citizens of the area would prefer altering the proposed "Alternate Routes" and would be willing to help establish the less intrusive route's right-of-way. The proposed "Alternate Routes" could easily be changed by eliminating the small jog in the route and the two 90 degree turns. The power line would then continue straight west thus following County road 136 at the point in which it turns westward.

2. The proposed "Alternate Routes" will go past Mr. Kenning's house two times. Mr. Kenning is best known as the "Father" of the stray voltage awareness movement. The proposed "Alternate Routes" could be seen as a direct attack on Mr. Kenning for his years of law suits he brought against Northern States Power (NSP) Company. Mr. Kenning argued the impact of stray voltage on his farm animals and his family's health due to a NSP power transmission line over his property. Mr. Kenning had fought with NSP for years before NSP finally agreed to move the power transmission line. When I read the intended "Alternate Routes" my first thought was "are they trying to give Mr. Kenning a heart attack." Given the intensity of the previous on-going court battles, I could easily see a court agreeing with Mr. Kennings heirs should his health fail.

- The proposed alternate routes could easily be changed by eliminating the small jog in the route and the two 90 degree turns. The power line would then continue straight west thus following County Road 136 at the point in which County Road 136 turns westward. The power lines would still go along Mr. Kenning's property but it would be a significant distance from his home and farm animals. The power line would also go along the edge of our family property instead of thru the middle. This change to the proposed alternate route would eliminate construction cost and environmental impact on the trout stream, oak forest, and people

3. The historic St. Boniface Chapel and the historic St. Augusta Trail are located within the Chapel Hill Farm. The Chapel Hill Farm is in the process of being developed into a Village or community that highlights the historical significance of the sites and makes the sites a historical destination. The plans can be seen at www.chapelhillmn.com

- The current "Alternate Routes" with its small jog will cut through the middle of the Chapel Hill Farm thus effectively killing the project. This would result in a loss of a significant opportunity to preserve and highlights one of the areas oldest sites with historical significance and would be a great loss to the area.

Conclusion: As previously stated, the "Primary Route" is the preferred route by the vast majority of the citizens of the area. While it has been stated that the MnDOT is opposed to the "Primary Route", this route will have the least negative impact on the environment and the citizens. As an environmental consultant, I understand many of the possible issues and remedies. The DOT's opposition seems to be stated as a "safety" issue. While safety is the number one priority, it can be used as a "red herring"- who can argue against it. The terrain is such that in much of the area along I-94 the ditch slopes are quite high thus eliminating the possibility of vehicles hitting the poles. It is also my understanding that some poles are designed to accommodate vehicle impact and many additional measures can be put in place to resolve any of the DOT's safety concerns.

Thank You
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I-135-001

This federal scoping process is specific to only the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345-kV project. As such, we have forwarded your comments to the project team dealing with the project with which you have raised concerns.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be available on the RUS website at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be solicited after its publication.

